

Quality and Capability Issues for Education: Implications for National Budget 2008-2009

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The Constitution provides for education through a uniform, mass-oriented and universal system of education and extending free and compulsory education to all children to such stage as may be determined by law, relating education to the needs of the society in order to remove illiteracy.

Literacy is at the core of the human right to education.

The Budget for 2008-2009 must focus primarily on the following issues pertaining to quality and capability in education. These are:

Long term measures that would lead conclusively to skills and capacity building of active population, especially the youth. Added emphasis upon promoting special skills training courses and informal learning systems for all, especially the secondary school dropouts and others for both self and wage employment. Quality education is the priority now. Increase in UPE allocation by 50% is needed.

Further, increase in allocation to TVET must be around 183%. TVET participation is as low as 3 percent (of which, girls' inclusion is abysmally low) and this, according to the PRSP, should be increased to at least 20 percent by 2020. Thus TVET would require enhanced allocation to Tk. 20 per student per day, i.e. three-fold increase from the present Tk. 7 per day. Improve curriculum and number of courses/credits (160 to 170 minutes of theoretical and 150 minutes of practical classes. Updated machines and knowledgeable, motivated, teachers are required. Restructure the VET system (improved quality and market relevance) and take targeted measures to bring and retain students from poor, vulnerable and hard-to-reach families in schools and put emphasis, especially at higher levels, on standardization and monitoring of performance.

Programs for ultra-poor, SME/Trade in remote areas, TVET courses for drop-out students, TTC centres in rural areas, refocused VTIs and TTCs, TOT courses etc. are needed. Enabling children to move from primary level to secondary level through a system which ensures remunerated employment through a reassessment of capabilities and needs, is required. Increase participation of female teachers in polytechnic training institutes from 19 % (2007) and nil in Survey Institutes. Service needed for pre-service training arrangements for TVET teachers especially girls.

Provide opportunities for employment to secondary level students (both successful candidates as well as those who discontinue) through vocational/technical education for children in secondary

and pre-secondary level. Establish programmes of appropriate learning, life and work skills to meet the learning needs of all young adults and ensure access, participation and completion of relevant courses. Whereas the optimum estimated costs for each primary level student should have been \$ 55 in 2005, GoB has been spending \$25 (2005) increasing to \$ 40 (2007), which includes almost one-half contribution from individual parents' resources. This was calculated to be raised to \$ 86 per student by 2015. The major estimated cost from key education interventions of MDG, was projected to be \$1.2 billion between the years 2005 to 2015. It emerges that (even if modestly estimated) GoB should set aside \$ 40 per student, for improving learning achievements for each primary school student in 2008. Identifying and retaining programs that can be replicable and can harness the achievements in the education sector, on a sustained basis, adequate to meet the development strategies envisaged in the PRSP. For this budget, follow-up on the previous budget is required in planned income generating activities for 6.5 lac persons, literate, through Mass Education, linking performance of institutions to eligibility for salary subvention with formation of Inspection body and special training for teachers on English Language and Vocational Education.